Wildlife trade

*265. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Delhi-based NGO, Wildlife Trust of India, conducted a study into wildlife trade in 2002 in Uttaranchal and U.P.; if so, what were its findings; and

(b) whether Government are thinking of having dialogue with Chinese and Nepalese Governments in this regard so that wildlife conservation is effectively taken care of?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir. The Wild Life Trust of India, with the assistance of the forest and police officials of the States of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal, conducted a study on wildlife trade during the year 2001-2002. The important findings of the study are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) Government have bilateral arrangements with the Chinese and Nepalese Governments for effective conservation of wildlife. A protocol on the conservation of the tiger has been signed between Government and the Governmet of People's Republic of China. Regular trans boundary consultative meetings are held with the Government of Nepal on biodiversity conservation.

Statement

Important findings of the studies on wildlife trade conducted by Wildlife Trust of India

(i) The trade in wildlife, its products and derivatives, is driven by demand from across the borders.

(ii) Criminals engaged in wildlife crimes are highly organized having strong international nexus. Wildlife goods are being exchanged for arms and narcotics.

(iii) India's international border with Nepal and China is highly porous thereby providing safe passage to the smugglers.

(iv) The traders use waterways for illegal shipment of wildlife from Uttar Pradesh *via* West Bengal to Bangladesh.

(v) Seizures during the last few years reveal that the enforcement agencies are much more pro-active.

(vi) Chinese Government, at the request of the Indian Government, has officially banned the use of tiger bones.

(vii) Tibetan refugees settled all over India exploit the mysticism regarding Tibetan medicines especially amongst the poor un-educated people for using such medicines derived from wild animal parts and products.

(viii) The State of Uttaranchal is a critical area for wildlife trade because of its border with Nepal and Tibet.

(ix) Leopard bones are being sold in the illegal market as a substitute for tiger bones

(x) Alternative livelihood to the hunting and gathering tribes like kanjars, bahellias, madaris, chirimars etc. can help in curbing poaching in illegal trade.

(xi) Recycling of revenue raised from tourism and other activities can be directed towards anti-poaching and anti-trade activities.

(xii) Immunity may be given to the field staff for use of fire arms under Criminal Procedure Code.

(xiii) Enhancing anti-trade reward scheme through use of secret service fund will help in curbing the illegal trade.

(xiv) There is a need to maintain a Central Data Bank for Wildlife Crimes.

(xv) Sensitization of judiciary will be highly useful in disposal of wildlife offence cases.